

STUDENT CENTERED LEARNING IN ENGLISH ALIVE LEARNING THROUGH COMMUNICATIVE APPROACH

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Abstract

Student Centered Learning ‘SCL’ approach has major pedagogical benefits to identify and know how the responsibility of SCL puts on learners, for their own learning by using variety of English language actively as medium of instruction to class subjects. It involves students in more decision-making processes, and learns English by doing to class subjects learning. They are 90% doing participating and the real thing during class while students practicing English for real-world skills. Learning becomes more active, it becomes more memorable: because it is personalized, and relevant to the students’ own lives and experiences, it brings English ‘alive’, and makes it relevant to the real world. In the process of learning, the more actively involved students are in their own learning, the more they are likely to remember what they learn. By using communicative approach, English again becomes more ‘real’ and part of the students’ lives.

Key words: Student Centered Learning; Variety of Language; Communicative Approach

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1. INTRODUCTION

SCL environment provides a space for students to develop the strength of English skills. Such as Students Centered Learning will encourage students to practice English actively, especially to the students of teacher trainees in English institutions. They read many English textbooks especially for their class subjects’ presentation and discussion. This paper tries to describe at how students will be able to overcome their long term problem through the practice of English in SCL environment. The method leads students using variety of language to the class subjects based on communicative approach. Meanwhile, learning activity SCL approach turns students more active than

usual. This activity may give contribution to students communicating English alive. Therefore, the more students are dominant in SCL environment, the better they are mastery English, because “*Practice makes permanent.*”

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Setback of Teacher Center Learning

Almost all educations in Indonesia conduct their teaching using conservative and TCL approach traditionally. Students learn English ‘in straight lines’ starting from no knowledge, through highly restricted sentence-based utterances and on to immediate production. And, Harmer cited from Woodward (2005:82), by breaking language down into small pieces to learn them, it may be cheating the students of a language ‘interlocking variables and systems’. He added that human learning is more random and convoluted. The teachers and lecturers tend to be more dominant. It gives a setback that students are not active during class; especially they are not given English environment to communicate English using variety of language without teacher intervention.

2.2. Communicative Approach

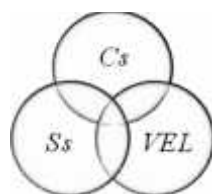
The ‘what to teach’ aspect of Communicative approach, according to Harmer (2005:82), stressed the significance of language function rather than focusing solely on grammar and vocabulary. The guiding principle was to train students to use these language forms appropriately in a variety of contexts and for a variety of purposes. As Routledge cited from Crystal (2010:80), a variety of language is a system of expression whose use is governed by situation factors ... varieties are, in principle, systematic and predictable. The ‘how to teach aspect’, in Harmer, it is closely related to the idea that ‘language learning will take care of itself’, and that plentiful exposure to language in use and plenty of opportunities to use it are vitally important for a student’s development of knowledge and skill. Activities in communicative language teaching typically involve students in real or realistic communication where the accuracy of the language they use is less important than successful achievement of the communicative task they are performing. As the results, students have a desire and purpose to communicate with no materials control. They concentrate to the content not form, besides using variety of language without teacher intervention.

3. Students Center Learning

SCL puts more responsibility on the learners for their own learning. It involves students in more decision-making processes, and they learn by doing, rather than just by listening and performing meaningless tasks which are often not in context and therefore ‘unreal’ to them. The more actively involved students are in their own learning of class subject, the more they are likely to remember what they learn (refer; diagram 1 SCL class & 2 Forgetting Curve. Because learning becomes more active (rather than

passively listening to the teacher), it becomes more memorable: because it is personalized, and relevant to the students' own lives and experiences, it brings variety of language 'alive', and makes it relevant to the real world.

Diagram 1: SCL class



Note: *Cs*: Class subject; *Ss*: Students; *VEL*: Variety of English Language

3.1. Features of Students Center Learning

When planning more student center lessons it is useful to remember the following:

- a) The more they contribute, the more they are likely to remember. We should never underestimate the ability of our students.
- b) If, however, teachers use the textbook as a base for then moving on to practice activities relating to the students' class subjects and areas of topic discussion, the students are more likely to become involved in the lesson, thereby remembering more.
- c) The main reason for students learning a language is to be able to communicate with other speakers of that language. In reality they will probably speak English with more *non-native* speakers from the region than with native speakers, and the ultimate goal is to be able to understand and respond to each other. Students therefore need opportunities to practice communicating in English without the constant fear of making mistakes hanging over them. If you feel the need to correct their mistakes, don't interrupt their conversations, make notes and give feedback later.
- d) Students have choices and make decisions about learning. Group work requires negotiation and decision making – working together towards a common goal.
- e) Focus on confidence building for real-world skills. By developing communicative competence, language again becomes more 'real' and part of the students' lives.
- f) Encourage interest in English used in the real world. By using authentic materials familiar to the students (class subject articles, PowerPoint, question/answer sheets) students are constantly in touch with the language in an absorbing way.
- g) Open-ended tasks are wider in their focus and involve a variety of language skills.

- h) High exposure to English through the use of authentic materials again: students may set homework involving research undertaken using the internet or other English language reference sources.
- i) Students learn *more* than language. They are also encouraged to think critically and develop problem-solving skills through more creative tasks and group work.

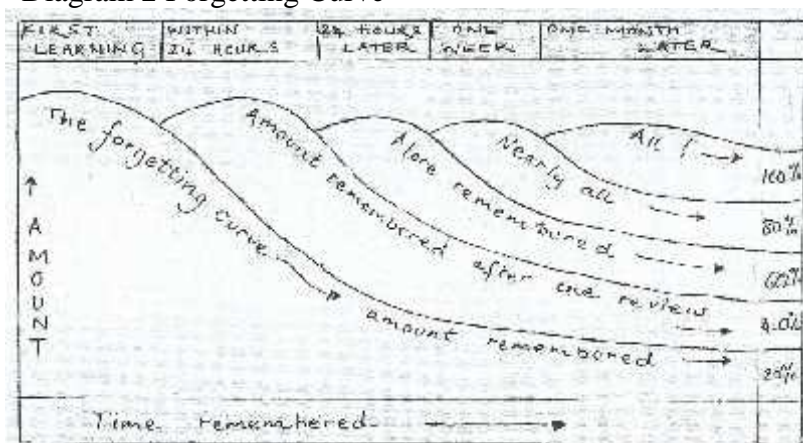
3.2. Review and a 'forgetting curve'

"Practice makes permanent."

The key process that bridges the gap between learning and acquisition is review. Review is a process of practising what has been presented to master the knowledge (to become permanent). Learners with learning difficulties would be given enough opportunities and even time to repeat through a variety of language and activities. One example of the 'from learning to acquisition' process can be seen on the 'forgetting curve' that shows the process from first learning to acquisition.

There is a time line that illustrates the time of mastering (acquiring) a certain amount of knowledge. The first 'forgetting curve' expresses how much students would remember during the period if they did not review anything. There is the probability that a learner would remember only 20% of the presented knowledge. On the other hand, the other curves show how review is effective and leads towards the acquisition of knowledge.

Diagram 2 Forgetting Curve



4. DISCUSSION

Writer describes what and how the responsibility SCL puts on learners for their own learning, fifth semester students majoring English education in Universitas Islam Balitar. The students use English alive in the context of learning side-by-side with other

class subjects such like literature, linguistics, English skills, research, cross-culture understanding, and the rests. Writer will obtain data from the class through observation, survey, video recorder, worksheets, and RPS. The data from observation and video recorder involve the students' activity in more decision-making processes, and they learn by doing, rather than just by listening and performing meaningless tasks which are often not in context and therefore 'unreal' to them. Writer will analyze data analysis of learners' responsibility and categorize them into spoken and written activity. The rests of other data become supportive data to the analysis.

During teaching learning of the class subjects, students have more decision-making processes, and they use variety of English alive simultaneously by the language as a tool of communication among themselves. Bloomfield (1933) states language plays a great part in our life. Meanwhile Harmer (2005:84), the 'what to teach' aspect of the Communicative approach stressed the significance of language functions rather than focusing solely on grammar and vocabulary...to train students to use these language form appropriately in a variety of contexts and for variety of purposes. Therefore, English spoken language is actively used in the class for the introductory in greeting, opening conversation, giving instruction, discussion, and argumentation, asking and answering questions, closing, parting, and other general things.

Meanwhile, they also do writing article assignments in English on their teaching subjects. All the class activities are taken place actively by students who should have at least Basic English, and they will set and present their English as medium of instruction during study. The approach of SCL puts students as actors while lecturer stands as supervisor, moderator, and observer in the particular subject, (refer; diagram 2). Thorough out this process students learn by doing the language variety they are been learning. The language is used in real-world in long time learning to the specific subject they are learning, such like a subject writing or novel. Because learning becomes more active using English (rather than passively listening to the teacher), it becomes more memorable: because it is personalised, and relevant to the students' own lives and experiences, it brings language 'alive', and makes it relevant to the real world. The teaching English alive has a relevant activities in Communicative approach, typically involve students in real or realistic communication, where the accuracy of the language they use is less important than successful achievement of the communicative task they are performing (Harmer, 2005:85). See Table 1.

The learning sources of class subject above are textbooks, e-books, journals, objects, field notes, and website. The topics of discussion present in the form of articles, PowerPoint, and illustration. By the end of SCL class activity, students have to furnish their discussed topics in hard and soft copy before submission. The expected furnished product is (e.g. short articles compiling for evaluation). Students communicate in English language forms during teaching and learning activity in the class subjects.

Teachers and lecturers of traditional teaching method often apply Teacher Center Learning 'TCL' approach. They actively conduct classes using second language

of Bahasa Indonesia, and/or native language of Javanese or others. They also use code-switching and code-mixing of English/ Javanese or other native language to the students, and students to the teachers. It has been using very long term problem, and become habitual speakers of code-switching and mixing to many schools and universities in Indonesia.

In contrast, putting the habit of students learning English alive in SCL context is very important. Such environment will adjust the student's behavior and reward them with an achievement using variety of English, especially to the students of English teacher trainees. They usually enroll 12 class subjects study in one semester with 24 credits subject at 24 hours within a week. Because of long hours learning English actively in SCL environment, they should be able to achieve the competence of using language variety. This method of learning through SCL approach will overcome the weaknesses of activities such like English weekend, English area, English corner, English day, English penalty, and so on. In alternative, all these activities just to support the existence of teaching English alive.

Table 1. Setting using variety of English language in SCL class

Activity	Pre-tasks	Task cycle	Post tasks
Lecturer/ teacher	Greeting Opening, Introduction to the class subject (Semantics).	Monitors/ observe: To judge the success of the different materials and activities that will be taken into lesson, or make changes in the future.	Giving constructive feedback. Deep-end: making correction and adjustments of the task. Closing & parting.
Student/ students	Greeting Name and position. Explore the topic of class subject (Semantics). Highlight useful words and phrases; provide questions in related topic To understand task instructions	Students perform the task in pairs or small group (paper-presentation and Ppt.) Tell the rest of the class what they did and how it went. Report on the task either orally or in writing. And/or compared notes on what has happened.	Students are on their own in a group of 3 to 5 students. Discuss and try to answer in written and orally to the questions given during pre-tasks. Students manipulate, comprehend and interact with the task. Deliver information. Making closing.

STUDENTS CENTER LEARNING ACTIVITY USING ENGLISH ALIVE APPROACH

Sample Subject: Discourse Analysis.

Discourse analysis is a broad term for the study of the ways in which language is used in texts and contexts.

Hours : 90 minutes.

Media : LCD, Power point, whiteboard, and hard copy articles.

Medium : English.

Table 3. Activities of English Alive Approach

Students' Activity	English Alive
GREETING	<i>Good morning/ afternoon/ evening, (Madam/ sir/ class). Welcome to Discourse Analysis lesson. Hello/Hi everyone.</i>
OPENING Name and position:	<i>Let me just introduce myself. My name is Susan. As some/most of you already know, I am Susan. I'm in charge of/responsible for presenting the topic of Text & Context in Discourse Analysis subject. I'm the first turn presenter for this lesson.</i>
Presentation (articles & questions)	<i>The titles/ subject/ topic of today's presentation talk is Text & Context. Today I'd like to speak about Text & Context. What I'd like to talk about is Text & Context.</i>
DISCUSSION Objective: Main parts/outline: Visual: Timing: Questions:	<i>The objective of this discussion is to answer the questions related to Text & Context. The aim today is giving some background about Text & Context. I've divided/ split my talk into four main parts/ discussion. Firstly, what I want to do is give you some background from Text & Context. Secondly/Thirdly we will look at/move on to Text & Context. Then/Next/After that/Finally, I will speak about/examine of Text & Context. I will be using whiteboard and LCD. The presentation will take/last about 15 minutes. I will speak for about 15 minutes. I plan to be brief. About 15 minutes. If you any questions please feel free to interrupt.</i>

Audience:	<i>Please interrupt me as we go along if you have any questions. I'd be glad to take any questions at the end of my presentation. I know you have all read the topic. I'm very grateful that you could come today. It's nice to see all of you. I look forward to your comments on this.</i>
Link to start:	<i>Ok. Let's start with the first point which is explaining the background of Text & Context. Right. We can begin by looking at the background of Text & Context first.</i>
END	<i>Ok. That brings me to the end of my presentation.</i>
Signaling the end:	<i>Right. That covers everything I wanted to say about.... So, that's all I have to say. To sum up... In brief...</i>
Summarizing:	<i>Before I finish, let me just go over... If I can briefly summarize... To conclude, I would like to say that... I'd like to finish by saying... In conclusion...</i>
Concluding:	<i>It seems to me, then, that we should... I would therefore recommend/advise that... I have prepared some questions which I will pass round. I'll give you my e-mail address in case you want to follow up something I said.</i>
Final recommendation:	<i>Thank you for listening so attentively.</i>
Support:	<i>Thank you for your attention. I hope that this has been useful.</i>
Closing:	<i>I'd be glad to answer any questions. So, do you have any questions? Are there any questions?</i>
Inviting questions:	<i>Ok. I think that brings me to the end of the presentation. Are there any questions? Yes, the guy/ our mate sitting there (points).</i>

Sources: English for presentation (Dignen, B: 1999).

The above is students' center learning activities using variety English language alive during classroom. The aspect of *communicative approach* in this study will train students to use English language forms appropriately in a variety of contexts and purposes. As the results, students have a desire and purpose to communicate with no materials control. They concentrate to the content not form, besides using variety of language without teacher intervention. In review and a 'forgetting curve' *Practice makes permanent*, learners with learning difficulties would be given enough opportunities and even time to repeat through a variety of language and activities.

4. CONCLUSION

There is a gap of teaching English as a foreign language today in Indonesia. It is based on course books, and yet students are unable to communicate English actively. For eight semesters studying in undergraduate course, students' ability still not achieving to the stage of competency, although teaching has been using curriculum, schedule & lesson plan accordingly. However, through 'Learning English Alive in SCL Approach', has made students explore aloud using variety of English language during learning and teaching class subjects. This situation has rewarded students to the environment where they get encourage to communicate and talk to each others in English during classroom activity.

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